

THE FEARFUL SHIPWRECK.

ARRIVAL OF THE EMPIRE CITY,

WITH

NINETY-TWO OF THE SURVIVORS.

Reported Safety of Captain Herndon

and Others.

THE THRILLING DETAILS OF THE DISASTER.

Narratives of the Calamity, by Mrs. McNeil,

Mr. Herndon, Mrs. Chayer, Miss Fallon, John

Gumming, Mr. O'Connor, Mrs. O'Connor,

Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Hawley, Oliver F. Man-

ning, Captain Rodgers, Billy Birch, Mrs.

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WOMEN AT WORK BAILING OUT.

Struggle of Five Hundred Human Beings Cast

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AFTER ASHBY RETURNED he called together the engineers

and firemen, and consulted as to what should be done.

A pipe had broken and a great deal of steam was escaping,

which was all the difficulty visible to us. Efforts were

made to stop the engine, but this proved impracticable.

I inquired of one of the firemen the extent of the trouble, and

I was told that the steamer had sprung a leak, and that water

was pouring in quite rapidly, and that it was impossible

to pass the coal; and for this reason the engines had stopped.

As yet the water had not touched the fire in the furnace.

It was found, after several hours, that the water was

coming in at such a rate that it would be necessary to form

an extra aid. Accordingly, two lines of men were formed

on the starboard, and another on the larboard side of the

steamer, with buckets, to take out the water. This was

about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. When the call for the

buckets and aid of the passengers was called for, there was

some confusion among the passengers at first; none

however, placed the cause as a real danger.

At this time the wind was blowing almost a hurricane.

I ventured my head above the deck once or twice, but I

felt as though there was danger of the wind blowing it

off, so violent and terrific was the gale. In connection

with the buckets, guns of men were arranged with barrels

to take up water by means of pulleys. The pumps had been

abandoned before this time. Every body worked like a

good fellow, and the water was gained on such an ex-

traordinary rate that it was not long before the main

bottom of the ship, and several revolutions were made with

the wheels. The water now gained on the ship, and at

length put out the engine fire. Meanwhile efforts had been

made all along to get the deck dry as work, but

without any success.

READ LATER—SINGING.

The labor of the men at the buckets and barrels was

very severe and trying. Everything was done to keep

up the spirits. To give impetus and encouragement to the

work, a large number sang while laboring. The voices of

the workers rose merrily and powerful above the din of

the storm and the lashing of the steamer side by the

waves. The burden of the song was the stately

couplet, sung with a sailor-like melody and virility—

Beate O, Beate O, jump and go,

We'll be jolly blubber-ers.

From want of keeping up a proper system of manage-

ment, however, in arranging the men in watches, so as to

alternate at proper intervals, at the first a number

of men, notwithstanding the stimulus of song

staging, became so completely tired out that

after a time they had to give up work. Some fell

down exhausted and fainting in their sleep.

LADIES' PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION AT THE DECK.

At this crisis some of the ladies behaved most

generously and nobly—several of them volunteering

to take their place at the buckets, and the men, as

soon as they were, had too much gallantry to

allow this. The offer of the ladies, however, to assume

a portion of the trying task gave renewed encouragement to

the men. Mrs. A. J. Easton, a bride, who with her

husband were among the passengers, and were on a wedding

trip, furnished the men a large number of bottles of wine.

The liberal bestowal of the wine, and the spirit which

prompted its donation, was the admiration of all. Not

only was increased vigor given to the men, but it roused

them to work still more bravely on.

Several of the passengers, whose position and intelligence,

and, withal, the trying circumstances in which the

ship was placed, ought to have restrained from doing

themselves, however, properly, drank excessively of

liquor on board the ship, and probably from their own

private stores, and made themselves very noisy and

troublesome. I know two of the passengers of high social and

political associations, who refused to work, but got extremely

drunk, so much so that their mere presence had to

be taken into consideration. In that condition they lay when the

steamer sank.

The men worked at the buckets, endeavoring to bale

the steamer, from Friday at 4 P. M. till Saturday night.

A great difficulty in the progress of the work was the want

of proper and strengthening food. A dry cracker was

about all that could be got hold of. What made it still

worse was the impossibility of getting water to drink.

During the night the men had to work with

little or no sleep. Captain Herndon, with all his ability

and disinterestedness of character, and notwithstanding his

possession in a high degree most of the traits necessary

to an efficient commander, was not equal to the

present trying emergency. He ran all over the ship, running

here and there himself for a blanket, or a hammer,

or trivial things which he should have sent others for. He

was not wanting in many courtesies, but he wanted to

be prompt. He had subdivided matters properly,

and extended the system of control necessary to the oc-

casion. I think the steamer might have been kept afloat

longer than she was, and possibly saved.

At two P. M. Saturday a sail was seen from the wind-

ward. Guns were fired and signals of distress hoisted.

Fortunately the vessel saw us and came down under our

stern, being kept to the windward to lay it, but the

gale blew her away three or four miles to the

leeward. The sight of this brig, which proved to

be the brig Marine, gave increased encouragement

to the men engaged in bailing the steamer, and they

kept at work lustily and nobly. The women and children

being gathered aft and on the starboard side of the

steamer, the work of getting them on board the

connected forthwith. Preparations were made to

take the small boats on board. The first boat, that was

lowered was at once hoisted. Better luck attended the

lowering of the second boat. The boatwain and three of the

crew were placed in charge of the boat, and it was soon

filled with a portion of the lady passengers and children.

A great deal of difficulty attended getting them into the

boat during the heavy sea. The third boat that was

lowered was in charge of the quartermaster and three

carmen; this was likewise filled with women and children

and pushed off for the brig Marine. The fourth

boat that was lowered with the same fate

as the first boat, and was knocked to pieces

by the waves.

The fifth and last boat let down so as to reach the

water and ride in safety. After all the remaining lady

passengers, excepting three, had been taken on board,

Ashby, the chief engineer, made a move to get into the

boat. Captain Herndon told him not to get in. Upon

this Ashby begged the captain to place him in charge of

the boat. He promised the captain that he would come

back with the boat, and what was more, prevail on the

captain of the Marine to come up with his vessel to where

the steamer lay, and get him to send his small boat out

to him. He said that he feared to trust him, as he was

afraid he would not come back. Upon this expression of

doubt relative to himself, Ashby said:—I promise you,

captain, that I will come back to the steamer, and

I will not desert her. I will be in this boat. I heard the

captain distinctly, and noted it, as the fact of

the doubt as to the boat's return caused me

to think that possibly the present would be the last op-

portunity I would have to save myself. I saw that all the

women were in, and would not allow myself any thought of

personal safety till the safety of the women had been

looked to. When Ashby got on board he drew a knife

as he saw several on the point of making a jump for the

boat, and declared if any individual jumped on board he

would take his life. I had a knife, too, at my command,

and was not to be awed by any such show. Knowing

that the women and children were safe, I felt justified

in making an effort for my own preservation, but the boat

was out of use, I gave a jump and landed in the boat.

I had \$2,000 in gold in a bag, and was about to tie it

about me, but with the haste I had to make to get into the

boat, thrust it into my side coat pocket. In giving

the jump I was thrown in some way on

my pocket into the water, and lost. Ashby did not

carry out his threat as to doing me any personal injury.

The boat had got but a few feet from the steamer when

a young man named Adams, from Baltimore, drew

forward from the steamer and came up the other side of

the small boat. He put his leg over into the boat and

in so quick and quiet a way only one or two of those in

the boat noticed it.

Fifteen persons, including Ashby and the carmen,

were in the small boat in which I had safely landed my

self. The reason why more did not attempt to get into

the small boat was because they felt themselves safer on

the steamer. No one believed it possible that a small boat

could live. Had the Central America struck a rock or reef

and been in danger of sinking, and there had been

but little sea at the time, no earthly power could

have prevented a mad rush for the small boats, and

so many crowding them that they

would have been a sight of being

sunk. As it was, it was a sight of being

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